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Post-Labor Day school start legislation moves in Senate, strong support shown from northern Michigan

LANSING – Michigan parents, students and tourism-related business owners would benefit from legislation requiring schools to start after Labor Day, said Sen. Jason Allen, R-Traverse City.

A diverse group from northern Michigan spoke before the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Small Business and Regulatory Reform Wednesday to voice their support for a post-Labor Day school start.

House Bill 4803 would require schools to begin classes after Labor Day. If a collective bargaining agreement conflicts with the provisions of the bill, it would not apply until after the expiration date of the collective-bargaining agreement.

“I am grateful for the outpouring of support for this legislation from the residents of northern Michigan,” Allen said. “We had a tremendous showing of residents from across the north that made the trek to Lansing to let my colleagues in the Senate know how truly important this legislation is to our area.”

Allen had several constituents from the 37th Senate District travel to Lansing to testify before the committee, including Terry Kimble of the Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce; Robert Gattin of the Traverse City Visitors and Convention Bureau and Holiday Inn manager; Jackie Merta of the Charlevoix Chamber of Commerce; Scott McKenzie of the Boyne Area Chamber of Commerce; Linda Hoath of the Sault Convention and Visitors Bureau; Dan Trotochaud and Marilyn McFarland of the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau; Bob Benser of the Chippewa Hotel, Cottage Inn and Murdick’s Fudge; Yankee Rebel and Horn’s Bar owner Steve Moskwa; Mackinac Island’s Village Inn owner Mary Dufina; and Bill Shepler of Shepler’s Mackinac Island Ferry.

At the committee meeting Allen joined Sen. Alan Sanborn, R-Richmond Township, and Sen. Jud Gilbert, R-Algonac, in voting to send HB 4803 to the full Senate for consideration.

Starting school after Labor Day would generate an estimated additional \$10 million in tourism-related tax revenue for the state. The added tourism also would create an estimated 2,000 new jobs and between \$100 and \$200 million in economic activity.

(More)

A recent poll found that nearly two-thirds of Michigan voters said they supported having schools open after Labor Day, showing widespread public support for the change.

“Northern Michigan schools are leading the way,” Allen said. “They continue to start after Labor Day, follow a similar break schedule as other districts and provide a top-notch educational environment. With flexibility in the way schools setup up their days, this legislation will allow students to get the educational hours they need, but greatly improve tourism options across the state. As one of Michigan’s top industries, it is reassuring to see such a groundswell of people backing this proposal.”

The legislation now goes to the full senate, before heading to the governor’s desk. At this time the governor’s office has not stated an official position on the bill.

“I encourage everyone who supports this legislation to contact the governor’s office and let her know just how important a post-Labor Day school start is to the residents of northern Michigan,” Allen said.

Letters to the governor should be sent to P.O. Box 30013, Lansing, MI 48909. For those interested in calling the governor’s office to express their support, the number is 517-373-3400.

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Editor’s note: Photos of Sen. Allen and residents of the 37th Senate District will be available later today at: <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/Allen/Allen.htm>

Audio comments from Sen. Allen may also be downloaded from the Michigan Senate Republican Majority Multi-Media Link web site later today at:
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/index.htm>